

Message Text

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AGRIC FOR LANKFORD/FAS AND HAYS/ARS

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SUBJ: AFLATOXIN MEETINGS

REF: BERN 6046 12/23/77

1. ALTHOUGH ABSENCE OF ENGLISH TRANSLATION FACILITIES DURING ZURICH SYMPOSIUM LIMITED ABILITY OF US DELEGATION TO PARTICIPATE MEANINGFULLY IN PRESENTATIONS OF OTHER AFLATOXIN AUTHORITIES, SUBSEQUENT MEETING OF US DEL WITH KEY SWISS FEDERAL HEALTH OFFICE (SFHO) OFFICIALS LED BY DIRECTOR DR ULRICH FREY, PROVIDED EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR FRANK AND CANDID EXCHANGE OF VIEWS.

2. AT LUNCHEON HOSTED BY AMB WARNER FOR US DEL AND SFHO OFFICIALS, US PROBLEMS OVER TRANSLATION ASSISTANCE WERE EMPHASIZED. SENIOR SFHO REPS WERE APOLOGETIC.

3. DR FREY REPEATEDLY STATED HE HAS ULTIMATE DECISION-MAKER HAD NO PRECONCEIVED MAXIMUM AFLATOXIN TOLERANCE IN MIND AND WOULD BE GUIDED NOT ONLY BY HIS STAFF BY ALSO BY US ARGUMENTS.
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4. DR HAYS, US DEL LEADER, SUCCINCTLY PLACED PROBLEM IN PERSPECTIVE LEADING DR FREY TO CONCLUDE EARLY THAT DIFFERENCES IN VIEWS BETWEEN US AND GOS LAY IN 1) PRACTICAL LEVEL TO BE SET AND 2) SAMPLING METHODS. DICKENS AND FULLER PRESENTED CONVINCING

EVIDENCE OF US PEANUT AND ALMOND INDUSTRIES' SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO COMPLY WITH PROGRESSIVELY MORE RESTRICTIVE US LEVELS. DRAWING ON EVIDENCE TO DATE, HAYS POINTED OUT THAT 1) THERE NO EVIDENCE IF LIVER CANCER IN US ATTRIBUTABLE TO AFLATOXIN AND 2) REDUCING CURRENT US AFLATOXIN LEVELS WOULD NOT IMPROVE UPON QUOTE TRACE UNQTE LEVELS FOUND IN FOOD PRODUCTS TODAY. DR HESSELTINE DESCRIBED WORLDWIDE EXTENT OF AFLATXOIN AND CARE IN STORAGE AND TRANSPORTATION NECESSARY TO MINIMIZE POTENTIAL FOR AFLATOXIN DEVELOPMENT.

5. ADDITIONAL US ARGUMENTS QUESTIONED WHETHER 1) SOURCES OF SWISS FOODS AND FEEDS IMPORTS COULD EVEN BE FOUND THAT COMPLY WITH RESTRICTIONS TIGHTER THAN PREVAIL IN US AND 2) IF SO, WOULD RISK OF SWISS REJECTION AT BORDER CAUSED BY VAGARIES OF SAMPLING, INHIBIT IF NOT ELIMINATE TRADE IN VITAL FOODS AND FEEDS.

6. FOLLOWING DINNER HOSTED BY SFHO ASSURANCES OF FURTHER COOPERATION WERE EXCHANGED WARMLY WHICH EMPHASIZED SFHO NEEDS NOT ONLY FOR CURRENTLY AVAILABLE UNCLASSIFIED

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RESEARCH DATA, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY THE RATIONALE BEHIND US DETERMINATIONS WHEN SCIENTIFIC DATA FAIL TO CORRELATE DIRECTLY WITH RISK OF HUMAN HEALTH.

7. EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE NOT SOLVED OUR PROBLEMS, WE BELIEVE THIS VISIT MOVED US TOWARDS SOME KIND OF ACCOMMODATION. THE US DEL DID A VERY GOOD JOB AND SWISS OFFICIALS SAID THEY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE MORE CONSULTATIONS LIKE THIS ON MUTUAL PROBLEMS. WARNER

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